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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:
THE FRENCH DEFENSE AND FOREIGN POLICIES: RWANDA CASE STUDY

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: The French Defense and Foreign Policies: Rwandan Case Study

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Thesis: The Rwandan crisis and its aftermath unveiled flaws within the French foreign and defense policies in Africa. Structural, organizational, decisional, as well as individual weaknesses at the strategic and operational levels hampered France's ability to manage the crisis and to deliver a credible and understandable message. These mistakes weakened French African policy, cast doubt on the French intentions in Africa, and led to harsh criticism. The Rwanda genocide triggered the implementation of corrective measures within the strategic and operational decision-making process and a shift in the French African policy. However, France still needs to develop a strategic communication strategy.

Discussion: From General de Gaulle to today, French policy in Africa has always had a peculiar place within the foreign and security policies. On 20 June 1990 at La Baule, after decades of French unquestioned support to African countries, President François Mitterrand decided to change policy by conditioning French aid on democratization. When the first elements of the Rwandan Patriotic Front crossed the border between Uganda and Rwanda on 1 October 1990 in an attempt to overthrow the Rwandan regime, the new French policy in Africa faced its *baptême du feu* in a highly explosive context.

Study of the events, from 1990 until the genocide in 1994, highlights weaknesses in the architecture supporting the French defense and security policies. The La Baule policy, lacking realism, challenged the Rwandan regime and restricted the French leaders' maneuver room. The French President's personality and over-empowered place within the chain of decisions worsened this problem. Moreover, France failed to deliver a proper, straightforward, and consistent message to support implementation of its policies.

Taking into considerations what happened, French officials have initiated structural and conceptual reforms within the French foreign and defense policies in Africa and have undertaken significant steps to strengthen and clarify the strategic decision-making process. However, recent examples emphasize the need for taking additional steps in the strategic communication domain, insofar as the strategic communication concept does not exist, does not sufficiently irrigate the French apparatus, and therefore remains highly dependent on political agendas.

Conclusion: In 1994 in Rwanda, France learned harsh lessons. Despite France's decisive intervention to protect Rwandan populations during summer 1994, France lost credibility with long term effects in Africa and among its allies. The crisis unveiled weaknesses: complex and opaque structures, lack of adaptability and realism of the foreign policy strengthened by a "monarchical" chain of decisions, discrepancies between the strategic message and the actions on the ground that eventually blurred France's message. Since then, important steps have been implemented to offset these weaknesses. Nonetheless, additional steps towards a real French Strategic Communication concept are still needed.

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FOREWORD

My deployments overseas, mainly in Africa, and my personal interest to the French African policy, made me aware of the sensitiveness and the complexity of being involved, as a foreign country, in initiatives intending to help African states to control unstable and unpredictable environments and to restore their control over their territories. This interest has grown all the more so due to what appeared to me as a widely-accepted natural French influence in Africa combined with a rampant belief that French African policy is always underpinned by the despicable notion of *la Françafrique*.¹ Recent combined operations conducted in Africa highlighted the reality of this observation and persistence of this judgment among French partners. Trying to understand why some close allies were still reluctant to work with the French forces in Africa, I realized that the Rwandan crisis played a significant role in France's loss of credibility and trust. But why?

Having seen my soldiers, my peers, and my chiefs taking great risks to protect population and limit violence in Africa, I could not believe that my country and the armed forces I belong to could have intentionally participated in genocide. I decided to try to understand why the anti-French discourse, started after 1994, keeps resonating with such power in public opinions, scholar arenas, and international institutions. My idea was then to dig into the French defense and foreign policies in Africa circa 1990 and the ways they were organized and implemented at the strategic and operational levels to look for weaknesses and discrepancies that could have created rooms for critical interpretations.

Therefore, the primary intent of my paper is not to identify responsibilities of the Rwanda genocide, to understand why the international community and especially the United States were so reluctant to intervene, to break down anti-French propaganda process driven by the Rwandan

Patriotic Front and relayed mostly by Anglo-Saxon and Belgian intellectuals, to scrutinize whether or not French operations were effective, nor to develop alternate hypotheses determining whether or not this human disaster could have been avoided or stopped. This study aims at understanding, 1) how the defense and foreign policies in Africa circa 1990 unintentionally set conditions for the crisis, 2) how and why these policies and the ways they were implemented give arguments or room for critics, and 3) to what extent the subsequent civil and military leaders acknowledged the French weaknesses and took corrective measures.

This paper is the result of my research at the Marine Corps University. I would like to express my gratitude to my mentor, Doctor Francis Marlo, for his patience and precious piece of advice. I want to extend my appreciation to General Henri Bentegeat and Major General Philippe Ponties for their passionate responses. My gratitude must also go to Lieutenant-colonel Emmanuel Durville for his constructive critics to this paper.

Last but not least, I want to thank my wife for her patience and dedication for my professional achievement.

INTRODUCTION

“We have had a US training effort with the Malian armed forces for some years. Some of that has occurred in Mali and some of that was Malian officers coming to the US for training including Captain Amadou Sanogo, who led the military coup which overthrew the constitutionally-elected government. This is worrisome for us. So we looked at that and we asked ourselves: first, did we miss the signs this was happening? And was there anything we did in our training that could have been done differently and have caused a different outcome?”²

General Ham’s bitter observation may likely raise concerns about what is now considered in many western administrations, after a decade of expensive, deadly, and questionable direct military interventions, as the solution to help weak countries to maintain stability: military cooperation. But he missed the real point. Is training the real issue? Is not rather credibility of the overarching foreign policy at stake? Does this event raise rather ethical and long-term policy vision questions? Is this event not the visible expression of a vain effect based approach in which one is under the illusion to master its targets’ reactions? At the time one decides to provide any kind of support to advise or assist a foreign country, one immediately and irreversibly ties its fate to the partner’s, for better or worse. France learnt this lesson harshly in Rwanda in 1994.

Indeed, in the wave of the genocide, accusations not only arose against France and senior officials but also discredited France’s role in Africa, with an effect still rampant today. While theater security cooperation and operational military assistance initiatives increase in western foreign policies, it is worth looking at the French case in Rwanda, not to determine responsibilities but rather to understand what the weaknesses were within the French foreign and defense policies that gave space for detractors to undermine long-term French credibility and to look at the appropriateness of measures undertaken since.

The Rwandan crisis and its aftermath unveiled flaws within the French foreign and defense policies in Africa. Structural, organizational, decisional, as well as individual weaknesses at the strategic and operational levels hampered France's ability to manage the crisis and to deliver a credible and understandable message. At the end of the day, despite French efforts in summer 1994 to protect Rwandan populations, these mistakes weakened French African policy, cast doubt on the French intentions in Africa, and led to harsh criticism. The Rwanda genocide triggered the implementation of corrective measures within the strategic and operational decision-making process and a shift in the French African policy. However, France still needs to develop a strategic communication strategy.

1. THE CONTEXT OF THE FRENCH INVOLVEMENT IN RWANDA

Since decolonization and General de Gaulle's presidency, the French obsession over France's international place in the world has played a significant role in the definition of the French diplomacy and policy in Africa.³ Born in the early 1960s, this policy towards the francophone African countries, known as development cooperation, was and is still one of the pillars of the French international action. This policy, openly advertised by the successive French presidents, has evolved over time within the international context and has aroused critics.⁴ France's African policy in 1990 was a product of the historical legacy of the French Empire in Africa and of internal and external influences. Primarily the objective was not only to ensure preservation of French national strategic interests, but also to maintain the affective link between France and its former colonies, to foster reciprocal commercial benefits, to contribute to security and stability in Africa, and to provide development aid.

The French policy for Africa from independence to President François Mitterrand's appeal for democratization at La Baule, as well as the regional and the local contexts of the Rwandan crisis, must be scrutinized prior to any study. Indeed they greatly shaped the course of events in Rwanda from October 1990 to August 1994, the leaders' decisions, and the subsequent interpretations of the outcome.

1.1. Rwanda before the crisis: a classical example of the French policy for Africa

*"We nurture a friendly relationship with the Rwandan Government which came closer to France after having noted the disinterest of Belgium towards its former colony."*⁵

At first glance Rwanda, at the time of its independence in July 1962 from Belgium, had no obvious reasons to benefit from the French cooperation policy and even had yet to become one of the French cooperation priorities. And yet, three months after the independence, in October 1962, Rwandan President Grégoire Kayibanda met General de Gaulle in Paris and declared:

“Like all Africans, Rwandans have the highest respect for the “man of Brazzaville.” Nobody did more for the decolonization in Africa. I knew general de Gaulle’s concern to see countries he led to the independence fully enjoying their new freedom by helping them in developing their national resources. I can say today that this concern also extends beyond and includes countries which were not under the French tutorship.”⁶

As a matter of fact, France supported Rwandan democratization and independence initiatives at the United Nations (U.N.) before the actual independence and sponsored Rwandan membership in the U.N. From this time, cooperation between the two countries built up slowly, with the progressive and growing Belgium disinterest towards its former colony. On 20 October 1962, the two countries signed a cooperation and friendship agreement which led to formal economic, cultural, and technical cooperation agreements on 4 December 1962. A French Ambassador officially took office at Kigali in 1964 and the permanent cooperation mission settled in 1969. At the very beginning of the 1970s, France fully took over Belgium influence without any contestation and plainly integrated Rwanda within the *pays du champ* (countries within the French area of influence) with the implementation of the classical two-fold African policy: on one hand, an ambitious development aid program, and on the other hand, military cooperation to provide security and stability to the country.⁷

The French military cooperation started later than the other cooperation aspects with a standard technical military assistance agreement signed on 18 July 1975.⁸ This agreement initially limited the military cooperation to the organization and instruction of the Rwandan Gendarmerie.⁹ It also highlighted the pre-eminence of the civilian leadership over the military cooperation, as all the French military personnel were ultimately under the control of the Ambassador via the chief of the military assistance mission (*Mission d’Assistance Militaire – MAM*). Notable is the fact that the agreement originally excluded French military personnel

from being involved in any preparation or conduct of combat operations and in any law enforcement operations.

1.2. Rwanda: a highly explosive situation in 1990

In late 1980s and early 1990s, major international political and economic evolutions led President Mitterrand to change his approach to African policy and to make a significant shift in development cooperation. This change collided with major external and internal challenges the Rwandan government had to overcome and create a highly volatile regional and national situation in 1990.

First, the end of the Cold War made the argument for the French military and economic presence in Africa irrelevant. Indeed, the threat of communist expansion, potentially thriving on the under-developed situation of many African states, and the French rationale to provide the third world with a non-aligned way, independent of the two major powers, could no longer justify the French cooperation policy, especially the military aspect of it.

Second, as a second-order effect, the end of the Cold War redirected France to European concerns. Indeed, Eastern Europe could bring new economic and diplomatic opportunities for Western European countries, and especially France, seeking new markets and looking for new alliances. As a matter of fact, efforts towards European Community strengthening, renovation, and integration became a major priority for the French President and diverted the focus from Africa to the Old Continent. Acknowledging the fact that France had limited resources and that Europe-Africa relationship and multilateralism could replace the French 'privileged' relation, African partners began to worry about the future of the French cooperation.¹⁰ This call to democracy in Europe echoed loudly in Rwanda in 1990.

Third, throughout the 1980s, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's demands for structural changes in African nations marginalized French economic activity. Acknowledging the failure of most of the development aid initiatives undertaken in Africa during the previous decades and the increasing amounts of aid lost to corrupt leaders, international donors advocated for brutal therapies. These donors aimed at restoring economic balances with severe budget cuts and major infrastructure projects holds, supported by democratization processes. Some argue that these radical measures and adjustment plans were in many cases a source of destabilization in many African countries.¹¹ The argument that Rwanda was a victim of the international community's new economic policy will be discussed later in this paper.

In the wave of these international evolutions, President Mitterrand decided to give a new direction to the French cooperation. At La Baule, on 20 June 1990, at the French and African heads of states summit, after highlighting the example of Eastern Europe populations who had overthrown their regimes discovering democracy, President François Mitterrand expressed his intention to deliver French aid on condition that African states move towards more democracy. His Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Roland Dumas, summed up this new orientation with the following:

“The wind of freedom which has blown over the east will inevitably have to blow to the south” and “There is no development without democracy, there is no democracy without development.”¹²

Moreover, while reasserting the French support to the African states, the President gave, at first glance, clear conditions on French military engagement:

“[...] the French policy tenet is that every time an external menace could threaten your independence France will be there. France, with the consent of its leadership, will look after protecting its nationals but it does not intend to arbitrate conflicts.”¹³

Thus, without contesting or terminating military cooperation, President Mitterrand drew a clear and visible line between protecting the African states' sovereignty and defending the African states' governments. In Rwanda in 1990 the boundary between external and internal threat was particularly thin and could easily lead to different interpretations. As a consequence, Mitterrand's statement not to intervene in African states' internal conflicts eventually trapped him and compelled French government to bend the definition of an external threat to pursue its objective to maintain regional stability.

In 1990, Rwanda suffered from multiple internal and external ills which often reinforced each other. First, the Belgian colonial legacy left deep scars in the Rwandan society. On 1 July 1962, Rwanda officially became independent. But the social and economic situations had yet to be satisfactory. Indeed, Belgium precipitated the independence process by hastily transferring powers from Tutsi to Hutu, and international observers immediately warned of the potentially explosive ethnic situation in the country.¹⁴ Over time, growing on the colonially-created myths painted the Hutu as an "inferior" race and the Tutsi as "foreign invaders," the situation degraded. Hutu governments violently repressed Tutsi in attempts to expel them out of the country. Between 1959 and 1973, 600,000 to 700,000 refugees fled to Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zaire.¹⁵ The refugee issue, and especially the case of the Rwandan refugees in Uganda, grew overtime and became one of the major tipping points which led to the Rwandan events. Indeed, on the Rwandan side of the border, the government denied their existence, their citizenship, and their claim to be part of the political arena. On the Ugandan side, refugees' destabilization potential was worrying both political leaders and the local population. Acknowledging that neither the Ugandan and Rwandan governments nor the international community were prone to tackle their problem, refugees strengthened their community and formed the Rwandan Patriotic

Front in 1987 with the aim of one day coming back to the land of their fathers in Rwanda by whatever means necessary.

In regard to the economy, in 1962 observers viewed the economic situation as the fundamental national issue stating that “desperately poor and underdeveloped, lacking resources, private funds, and qualified executives, Rwanda is likely to sink quickly in anarchy.”¹⁶ Despite decades of French economic aid since 1964, Rwanda was an agricultural economy extremely dependent on international market fluctuations.¹⁷ In the late 1980s, the conjunction of natural disasters, the worsening international economic situation, and the difficult adjustment plans imposed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund led the Rwandan economy to decay. This phenomenon was worsened by demographic pressure. Between 1950 and 1994, the population increased fourfold, hampering economic progress.¹⁸

The decline of the economic and social situation occurred within the national context of a more and more contested dictatorial regime fueled by the ethno-nationalist Hutu press. After seizing power in 1973 by a military coup, Habyarimana’s presidency progressively degraded in late 1980s with the growing influence of Hutu extremism and corrupt officials trying to maintain their privileges whilst resources were declining. Moreover, successive politico-financial scandals eroded the remnants of the popularity of Habyarimana’s regime among the Rwandans.¹⁹ Opening movements towards democracy following Mitterrand’s speech at La Baule and implemented by Habyarimana in 1990 did not change the overall trend. The development of an ethno-nationalist Hutu press in the wave of the political opposition was to play a significant role in the civil war beginning in 1990 and in the genocide. Additionally, on some occasions this press delivered messages which were to confuse observers as to the exact role of France during the events.²⁰

1.3. The French decision-making process and responsibilities sharing in 1990 and evolutions of the French commitment in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994

Before analyzing, in the second part of this paper, the areas of failure and weakness of the French foreign and defense policies unveiled in the Rwandan crisis, it is worth giving a brief overview of the French decision-making process and of the responsibilities-sharing in 1990 in the defense and foreign affairs domains. A quick snapshot on the evolution of the French military commitment in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994 will give better understanding for further developments.

Since the period of African independence, the French presidency has played a significant role in the definition of the policy towards Africa. According to the 1958 French Constitution, the President of the Republic has significant influence in foreign affairs, as he determines and conducts the policy of the Nation, is the guarantor of the respect of treaties and accredits ambassadors. In military matters, he is empowered as Commander-in-chief of the armed forces and presides over the national defense councils. Nevertheless, at least in constitutional theory, he has to share responsibilities with the government and his Prime Minister in these two domains.²¹

In regard to the cooperation, the existence of the Ministry of Cooperation, created in 1959, suggests that the French cooperation policy was fully integrated and coordinated. Nonetheless, in 1990 this Ministry was actually in charge only of black Africa cooperation initiatives, whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in charge of the other developing countries and remains the leader for all diplomatic relations.²² The Ministry of Cooperation was also responsible for the military technical assistance (*Assistance Militaire Technique* – AMT) through the Mission of Military Cooperation (*Mission Militaire de Coopération* – MMC). To sum up the situation in Rwanda in 1990 in regard to the military cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was

responsible for the political aspects, while the Ministry of Cooperation was the coordinator for the technical and financial aspects of the policy. The Minister of Defense had a limited role as the supplier and executer of the policy.

On the ground, French ambassador was in charge and assumed full statutory powers of the state. As such he was responsible for all aspects of the French cooperation and had to synchronize and coordinate with at least ministries of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and Defense. The MMC gave the authority of military technical assistance to an ambassador's military adviser, the Defense Attaché. As such he was in charge of the military cooperation as chief of the military assistance mission (*Mission d'Assistance Militaire* – MAM). The Defense Attaché had then an adviser role before the Ambassador for military matters, and a leading role for military cooperation initiatives. He maintained close ties with the MMC and was the link between the French military and the African army. Finally, the MMC was in contact with the Ministry of Defense and the department of African Affairs under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²³

Regarding military matters, the President get advice from his military chief of staff. In case of a crisis, and according to the *Ordonnance n°59-147 du 7 janvier 1959 portant organisation générale de la défense* (i.e. Defense general organization law), the President chaired a restricted Defense Council including at least his military chief of staff, the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS),²⁴ the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Nonetheless, as this paper will discuss later on, until 1993 Mitterrand did not use these Defense Council arrangements on a regular basis and favored a more direct decision process without chairing any councils.

From October 1990 to August 1994, the French military involvement in Rwanda kept changing in an attempt to follow the evolutions of both the crisis and the French objectives (see Annex C for a chronology of the events and Annex D for details on the different French military detachments from 1990 to 1994). From 1 October 1990, and the RPF offensive in the north-east of Rwanda, until the complete withdrawal of the French forces in August 1994, France conducted several operations (NOROIT,²⁵ VOLCAN, CHIMERE, AMARYLLIS, and United-Nations-mandated TURQUOISE) varying in size, scope, and objectives. Concurrently, the French military cooperation architecture evolved as well, with the pre-crisis military assistance mission being reinforced over time by a Military Assistance and Training Detachment (*Détachement d'Assistance Militaire et d'Instruction* – DAMI) and individual reinforcements as Deputy Defense Attaché for Operations advisor to the Rwandan Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.²⁶ During the four-year crisis, French military involvement intertwined combat operations, military assistance, and humanitarian operation which overlapped each other in their chains of command, responsibilities, and missions.

2. WEAKNESSES OF THE FRENCH RESPONSE

Beyond the general view that the international community failed or at least could have done a better job to prevent genocide in Rwanda and the short-sighted anti-French arguments stating that France was responsible for what happened, a study of the French crisis management at the strategic and operational levels unveils structural, operational, and individual weaknesses of the French policy in Africa and a lack of clear strategic communication strategy to support the foreign and defense policies.

2.1. The President and La Baule trap

At the strategic level, the crisis reveals weaknesses in President François Mitterrand's role and position within the French African policy in general and towards Rwanda in particular. Moreover, it shows how La Baule doctrine's lacked realism and how it trapped French authorities.

The President's institutional place within the defense and foreign policies and Mitterrand's personal relationship with Africa weakened the credibility and necessary objectivity that was needed to manage the crisis. First, in 1990, the French President was over-empowered for all matters related to the French African policy. As shown previously, according to the Constitution, defense and foreign affairs were domains of shared responsibilities between the President and the Government. The truth of the matter was that "French policy towards Africa, more than any other aspect of France's external policy, remains the *domaine réservé* of the President."²⁷ The *domaine réservé* was in fact an area of exclusive competency for the President enforced not by laws but rather accepted by habit and usage.²⁸ As a result, the President did not need any approval on the definition of the French African policy or on its implementation. Without questioning the legitimacy of the deployment of forces for Operation NOROIT to protect French nationals in 1990, the process that led to this decision is a telling example of the President's primacy in these matters. On 3 October 1990, after the Rwandan President asked for French military support, President Mitterrand decided to send forces as soon as possible. Both the military chief of staff and the Minister of Defense testified that Mitterrand made his decision without any discussion. An informal restricted Defense Council was set on 4 October with his diplomatic advisor, his military chief of staff, the CJCS, the Minister of Defense, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs to confirm the decision which has already been taken.²⁹ Again on 5

December, against his military chief of staff's advice, the President made his own decision to maintain half of the NOROIT forces in Kigali beyond the initial mandate.³⁰ The absence of any requirement in the Constitution, at that time, to inform and get approval from the National Assembly to deploy forces in operations other than declared wars was another element reinforcing the President's position. This over-empowered place of the President in the definition and conduct of defense and foreign affairs can be justified for being far more reactive and efficient, as seen with the quick French forces dispatch in Mali on 11 January 2013. Nonetheless, it may easily be exploited in French enemies' discourse to discredit French actions as *le fait du Prince*, out of any kind of controls, and all the more so as personal interests and beliefs of the President may be part of it.

Second, Mitterrand's deep personal involvement in Africa paradoxically weakened his position by raising suspicions on his objectivity. In 1990 François Mitterrand already knew quite well the French African policy, having developed over time his own views and personal relationships with many African heads of state. His personal interest started when he was Minister of Overseas France in early 1950s and his interest in Africa never ceased.³¹ Thus, while the Rwandan crisis unfolded, on one hand one could argue his African expertise convinced him to stay consistent throughout the crisis. Then, acknowledging that if France let Rwanda be overthrown by force, French protection would not be worth it anymore on the continent, he decided on a two-fold policy: 1) help, train, and equip the RAF to resist RPF; and 2) use French instruments of power to compel the Rwandan Hutu government to move towards a multiparty, power-sharing agreement with the Tutsi, and ultimately create a coalition government.³² But on the other hand, first one could argue that his personal involvement and relationship with Habyarimana blinded Mitterrand and prevent him to see Habyarimana's lack of will to

democratize, insofar as Habyarimana was supporting ethno-nationalist Hutu movements. And second, one could argue in another way that his decisions were the expression of his desire to defend French influence in Africa at whatever cost because he did understand and know what was happening and could not be naïve about Habyarimana's regime true nature, autocratic, ethnical, and racist.

Mitterrand's policy towards Rwanda and the La Baule appeal for democratization lacked realism needed to tackle the Rwandan crisis and eventually trapped French authorities within their own limits. Actually, the policy gave maneuver room to both Habyarimana and his opponents, while creating a destabilizing environment for the government. First, Habyarimana kept using the threat of invasion by external players, first to appeal to the French concern about regional stability, and second to avail himself of the French security protection by requesting additional military support. In particular, he understood how he could use the thin boundary between internal and external threat to take full advantage of La Baule's promise to protect African states' sovereignty.³³ He then always defined the attacks as a conspiracy undertaken by Ugandan Tutsi with the approval and support of Yoweri Museveni, the President of Uganda.³⁴ Mitterrand's policy surely requested democratization, but it was also necessary to ensure a military support to keep the balance between the opponents.³⁵ The Rwandan President ceded small step-by-step democratic reforms to keep Mitterrand's support and maintain a fake willingness to embrace La Baule's mindset. At the same time, he increased his support to ethno-nationalist Hutu movements and militias. The French policy implementation became a hazardous undertaking in Rwanda. Indeed, it demanded Habyarimana's regime reform while fighting a war for its survival.

Second, the French policy created opportunities for internal and external opponents to challenge the Rwandan regime. On the external front, the international reaction against the Rwandan regime following the RPF offensive conducted in October – November 1990 is a telling example of the La Baule trap. After the failure of the offensive, RAF could legitimately claim the victory. Nonetheless, the real political winners were Paul Kagamé's forces. In light of what happened, following La Baule's policy and his own beliefs, Mitterrand inserted the RPF into the Rwandan political process. Belgium, Great Britain, and the United States then pressured Habyarimana to open negotiations with the assailant. La Baule's conditioned democratization became a trap.³⁶ The French consistency in following the two-fold policy described above gave indirectly credit to the RPF and legitimized their status and their claims.³⁷ On the internal front, French pressures for democratization paradoxically opened doors to political debate but also to unscrupulous parties more prone to seize power by any means, even by alliance with the RPF invaders, than in fostering national reconciliation and stability. Eventually in early 1991, Habyarimana had to fight a military battle to survive, while opening discussions to solve the refugee issue, to implement a potentially challenging political opening, and to respect human rights. France was now trapped in its own principles and had no alternate policies to offer in the next three years of the Rwandan crisis.³⁸ External and internal opponents took advantage of this situation to weaken the regime and pursue their own agendas. It also left room for interpretations, and some observers saw Mitterrand's "balance of forces" policy as direct collusion with Habyarimana's government and as an indirect support to his anti-Tutsi policy.³⁹ Whatever French move to one side or the other of the pendulum (regional stability or democratization) would have occurred along La Baule lines, it undermined the long-term French

position, either characterized as a support to an ethno-centric dictatorial regime, or failing to provide security and stability as granted by treaty.

Concerned by Rwandan political democratization, but also certain of an RPF military victory if the RAF were not backed up by French forces, the French government and the President did not understand they had been trapped by actors of the Rwandan crisis on both side using La Baule policy. French authorities did not see the necessity to take a clear stand and to make a choice between regional stability and Rwandan democratic development.

2.2. Absence of a French strategic communication strategy: an inability to support effectively defense and foreign policies

During and after the management of the Rwandan crisis, France failed to take into account the strategic communication requirement to support its defense and foreign policies. From 1994 until today, some organizations and individuals have kept spreading, purposely or unintentionally, information about France's role during the Rwandan events seemingly suggesting a direct or indirect responsibility for the genocide.⁴⁰ This disinformation campaign resonates all the more so because French African policy appeared to be opaque, complex, and ambiguous, and because the French apparatus failed to deliver of clear and consistent strategic messaging during and after the events, leaving room for different interpretations.

Strategic communication is generally accepted as:

“Focused government efforts to understand and engage key audiences in order to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of the government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the action of all instruments of national power.”⁴¹

Nonetheless, strategic communication goes beyond this definition. It aims at fostering consistency within the government from the strategic decisions and verbiage to the actions undertaken on the ground, ensuring success of the government policies by countering the

opponent's propaganda, and improving global understanding of the government's actions. As a consequence, strategic communication is not only about government's messages, themes, and actions but it is broader and embraces also how external audience may perceive the whole of government's general behavior.

When the Rwandan crisis unfolded, the French African policy rested on a 'monarchical' but complex organization, at both strategic and operational levels, that conveyed a message of clientelism, opacity, and ambiguity. Opponents to the French involvement in Africa have kept using these apparent autocratic and complex aspects of the African policy to criticize its essential integrity, claiming that the only purpose was likely to hide shameful true objectives.⁴² As seen previously in this paper, at the strategic level, the 'monarchical' position of the President in regard to defense and foreign affairs, backed up by his strong and personal relationships with many African heads of state, could easily give room to arguments of a French clientelist policy in Africa out of any kind of democratic control.

Moreover, at the operational level, the organization of the cooperation itself was really quite complex.⁴³ On the ground, the boundary between cooperation aid to direct military action was sometimes blurry and therefore sent inconsistent messages. For example, the dual-hatted position of the French Defense Attaché as chief of the military mission and chief of Operation NOIROIT confused external observers. In addition, this situation created a complex command and control structure with three chains of command, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Cooperation, and the Ministry of Defense, creating substantial coordination issues.

In addition, the cooperation policy evolved over time in ways undermining and blurring La Baule's message. Indeed, the 1975 cooperation agreement was to go through two major

modifications in 1983 and 1992, which significantly altered the overall mindset of the military cooperation and might explain some of the fiercest critics to the French policy in Rwanda during the genocide in 1994. First, the 1983 revision permitted the French military to be involved in combat and law enforcement operations.⁴⁴ Second, the 1992 revision extended the scope of the initial cooperation agreement to embrace all Rwandan military forces and not only the Gendarmerie. This second revision came almost two years after a *de facto* expansion of the initial scope of the military cooperation. Thus, from 1990 to 1992, there was a lag between the agreement and its application on the ground. Whether or not it was done on purpose by the French government is not the point. These discrepancies, and the fact that this expansion of military cooperation domain did not fit La Baule's message not to intervene in internal conflicts, provided careful observers and scholars with arguments to support the idea that French involvement in Rwanda was somewhat opaque and ambiguous.⁴⁵

During and after the events of 1994, successive French governments failed to deliver clear and understandable strategic messaging to external audiences. First, they left rooms for opponents to seize the information initiative. For example, beginning with the October 1990 RPF offensive, the pro-Hutu press openly cheered the French involvement in operations NOROIT, AMARYLLIS, and TURQUOISE, creating confusion as to the exact role of France.⁴⁶ Similarly, in January 1993, several humanitarian organizations released a report, entitled "Genocide and war crimes in Rwanda," highlighting the human rights violations in the country since October 1990. Supposedly conducting the survey throughout Rwanda, these humanitarian organizations actually restricted their inquiry to areas under governmental control. Many newspapers and officials were to use this biased report to denounce the RAF actions and accuse the French government of supporting a regime of murderers.⁴⁷ At the end of the day, the silence of the

executive authorities and difficulties encountered to gather information compelled external observers to conduct simplified analysis with only a few sources. It has then become common for some observers to report events using second- or third-hand testimony without attempting to verify the credibility of their sources and the accuracy of their information.⁴⁸ Moreover this silence and apparent indifference of the French authorities has led, over time, to suspicions and even accusations of French direct support to a genocidal regime.⁴⁹

Second, in deploying forces for operation TURQUOISE, French authorities did not anticipate that some French contingents could inherently and unconsciously bear a destructive message threatening France's overarching objective. On 22 June 1994, after the international community had dithering to take a stand about the ongoing genocide, the United Nations Security Council took resolution authorizing France to use all means to protect civilian population. At this point, to assemble the force as quickly as possible, French authorities reassigned forces already in Rwanda and conducting military cooperation with the RAF to the non-partisan TURQUOISE humanitarian force. Although Mitterrand insisted TURQUOISE being covered by a United Nations mandate, this forces reassignment not only created difficulties for French soldiers to adapt to the mission changes but it also confused both RAF and observers and cast doubts on France's objectivity in regard to its humanitarian mission.⁵⁰

3. COULD IT HAPPEN AGAIN TODAY? CORRECTIVES MEASURES AND ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

Today, the French involvement in Africa is not decreasing.⁵¹ It is, therefore, worth looking carefully at the measures France has implemented since 1994 to avoid what happened during and after the crisis. Subsequent governments and presidents have carried out significant corrective measures in the organization of French African policy, in the decision-making process at the

strategic level, and in the communication domain. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement in French strategic communication efforts.

3.1. Correctives measures undertaken

In regard to the strategic chain of command and decision-making, the most important corrective steps that have been undertaken are giving Parliament more control over the deployment of forces abroad and creating a better organization of the decision-making process at the top of the state. First, the over-empowered position of the French President raised questions because there were almost no direct control measures outside the executive branch except “*post-mortem*” recourse to parliamentary investigation. Moreover, this system cast doubts on the objectivity of foreign and defense policies objectives. In 2008, President Nicolas Sarkozy initiated a constitutional reform aiming at limiting presidential power in defense matters. The reform limits the exceptional powers of the President granted in Article 16 in case of exceptional circumstances by reducing the period these powers could be exercised. Additionally, and more important in regard to forces deployments in foreign countries, the reform extended in a significant way the legislative branch’s role and powers. The government now has the obligation to inform the Parliament in any case of commitment of forces outside the national territory no later than three days after the operation starts. The government has also to obtain permission from the Parliament to extend an armed intervention abroad beyond four months.⁵² It is worth noting that this evolution does not question the primacy of the President in defense matters as the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. His power to immediately deploy forces without the consent of the legislative branch allows flexibility, responsiveness, and credibility in the use of French armed forces.⁵³

Second, the evolution of the chain of command and decision-making surprisingly resulted not so much from the events in Rwanda as from internal pressures. In 1993, the defeat of the presidential party in the legislative elections compelled President Mitterrand to appoint a Prime Minister and a government from the major right-wing party. This *cohabitation* put restraints over the *domaine réservé* of the president. *Cohabitation* set a real sharing of responsibilities between the president and the government. Up until this point, Mitterrand was the only one to conduct the Rwandan crisis. Under *cohabitation*, despite the *domaine réservé*, foreign affairs, cooperation, and even defense became really area of shared responsibilities. To deal with this new situation, Mitterrand reinvigorated the restricted defense council process which reconvenes every week with the Prime Minister, the concerned Ministries, the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his military chief of staff. All ongoing or planned operations were discussed, and the president decided after having heard the Prime Minister's advice. Under supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attendants of the council prepared the meeting in advance, allowing the Prime Minister to come to the council with arguments and a clear position. This new organization was to perpetuate beyond the *cohabitation* and is still in place today. Mitterrand and Chirac used it in numerous occasions, whereas Sarkozy was less keen on setting it.⁵⁴

In the same timeframe, subsequent reforms have strengthened the Chief of the Joint Chief of Staff's position. Since the First Gulf War, the CJCS has been the unique voice for the President, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Defense in regard to operations conducted abroad. The reform implemented in 2005 by the CJCS, General Henri Bentegeat, placed all service chiefs under the authority of the CJCS, except for discipline and morale matters. The CJCS is then responsible for the armed forces' budget, armament programs, and human resources. Another reform in 2009 added logistic and territorial organization to the array of the CJCS

responsibilities. This set of reforms reinforced the position of the CJCS within the strategic civil-military chain of command and decision.⁵⁵ Indeed, despite constant frictions between the Ministry of Defense and the CJCS, and differences in the way successive presidents gave credit to the CJCS during restricted defense council, the president knows that as chief of operations, the CJCS could ensure the success or warn him against possible failure.⁵⁶

Acknowledging the opacity, complexity, and potential danger of cooperation aid in 1990, the cooperation policy for Africa went through a deep reform process to change the organization, the methods, and the final purpose. In order to be more efficient, effective, and understandable, the new French African policy simplified the command and control structure and drew clear boundaries between military technical support and direct operational military support. In addition, France widened the array of partners involved, focusing its action to the development of African security capabilities and giving a greater place for European initiatives. To improve the command and control structure, in 1998 the Secretary of State for Cooperation merged with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, two new organizations were established to coordinate French and international cooperation initiatives and to synchronize French development projects, the *Comité Interministériel de la Coopération Internationale et du Développement* (CICID, i.e. Inter Agencies Committee for International Cooperation and Development) and the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD, i.e. Agency for Development) respectively.

On the military side of the cooperation policy, on 10 December 1998, a reorganization of the Quai d'Orsay⁵⁷ into the Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs, led to the establishment of the *Direction de la Coopération Militaire et de Défense* under the Directorate for Political and Security Affairs. In 2008, this organization was renamed the *Direction de la Coopération de*

Sécurité et de Défense (DCSD, i.e. Directorate for Security and Defense Cooperation).⁵⁸

Moreover, a clear boundary was set between structural cooperation, which deals with long term political issues falling under the DCSD, and operational cooperation, directly under the CJCS authority, which handles *ad hoc* actions to strengthen African security forces capabilities to cope with peacekeeping operations or terrorists threats.⁵⁹

To complete the structural changes, France made major changes to the conception of the cooperation itself. The new tenets of the French African Policy have abandoned the notion of a French backyard in Africa and transitioned from paternalist cooperation to real partnership. Four associated objectives support these principles: a focus on military cadres' education and training, cooperation initiatives to foster internal stability, a new framework to enhance regional stability, and more space for European and American involvement. On the ground, three major projects have been undertaken to fulfill these objectives. First, the *Renforcement des Capacités de Maintien de la Paix* (RECAMP, i.e. Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capabilities) was started in 1994 to build, train, and equip African security forces for them to acquire capabilities and capacities to take responsibility for security in Africa. Second, beginning in 1996, France developed the *Ecoles Nationales à Vocation Régionales* (ENVR, i.e. Regionally-Oriented National Schools) to educate and train military cadres. And third, France, alongside its major allies, is part of the African Standby Force initiative intending to grant the African Union an international force, with civilian, military, and law enforcement components.

On the communication side, French commitments in Rwanda, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in operations DESERT SHIELD – DESERT STORM, highlighted the lack of structures within the Ministry of Defense to cope with increasing media management and information management challenges. In 1998, creation of the Delegation for Information and Communication of the

Defense (*Délégation à l'information et à la communication de la défense* – DICOD) filled the gap. This organization, under the Minister of Defense's authority, coordinates and synchronizes information and public affairs regarding defense policy. To that extent, the DICOD ensures consistency of the communication with the CJCS's communication cell and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs both at the strategic and operational level when armed forces commitment is considered or confirmed.

With this set of reforms, both structural and political, and these new combined cooperation initiatives, French African policy displays a better consistency, coherence, synchronization, and readability for external audiences.⁶⁰

3.2. Outstanding issue

Despite the numerous reforms implemented, recent examples emphasize the need for taking additional steps in the strategic communication domain. Indeed, the strategic communication concept does not exist today at the top of the state and the communication arena remains highly dependent on political agendas.

In the wave of the French armed forces commitment in Afghanistan, it appeared that coordination of all communication efforts in theater was essential to ensure effectiveness, consistency, and synchronization within the overarching operational plan of the campaign. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recently developed a concept and a doctrine to support this coordination, to include information operations, public diplomacy, public affairs, civil-military operations, and military information support operations. Nonetheless, this doctrine does not identify as an objective the requirement to ensure consistency not only of the words but also of the acts. Moreover, this doctrine exists only at the defense level and there is not any overarching "French

Strategic Communication” concept or policy at the strategic level. Thus, today strategic communication culture does not integrate all the instruments of national power.

Most importantly, the consistency of France’s message is still dependent on the different agendas of political leaders and on the level of strategic communication education of civilian authorities. Therefore, it is still not surprising to hear different public assessments, on a same topic, from the two main ministries involved in a crisis situation, the MAEE and the Ministry of Defense. Additionally, political leaders still use military matters to further their own political objectives. Besides, the DICOD being under the Minister of Defense, the Chief of Joint Chiefs of Staff has a restricted freedom of maneuver to react to a crisis and at the end consistency and credibility of the operational communication is mainly personality-driven.

Finally, this absence of French Strategic Communication concept at the strategic level of the state hinders France’s ability to know what is going on in the international information and disinformation arenas, to advertise its actions and positions, and to counter-attack effective disinformation operations.

CONCLUSION

From 1990 to 1994, President Mitterrand and the French authorities kept trying to maintain regional stability and promote democratic development of the Rwanda. In summer 1994, notwithstanding the international community reluctance to be involved in the crisis, France endorsed the role of leader in the United Nations humanitarian intervention to protect civilian populations against his will. The deployment of French soldiers in operation TURQUOISE saved thousands of people from slaughter and provided medical aid to displaced people and refugees. But at the end of the day, France's message was deeply undermined by structural, organizational, and informational weaknesses within the foreign and defense policies. Complex and opaque structures, lack of realism of the foreign policy, in this particular case, strengthened by a "monarchical" chain of decisions, discrepancies between the strategic message and the actions on the ground, trapped French leaders, blurred France's message and cast doubts on true French objectives in Africa.⁶¹ Eventually, France faced great difficulties to get rid of the rumors about its complicity in the genocide. In 1994 in Rwanda, France learned harsh lessons and lost some of its credibility in Africa and among its allies. Since then, important changes have been implemented to offset French defense and foreign policies weaknesses. The success encountered by French diplomacy and military in Ivory Coast in 2011 after eight years of crisis is a telling example of these progresses. Nonetheless, a real French Strategic Communication concept must still come to ensure that future benefits of French actions fostering security, stability, and development will be supported by consistent, credible, and robust defense and foreign affairs policies.

In the military cooperation arena, there is no doubt that one could always find situations in which to blame a country for having trained and equipped armed forces later on behaving unexpectedly and responsible for shameful actions. International relations, conflicts, wars, remain human activities and as such are not a world of certainty. Two-fold military cooperation, both structural and operational, stays a powerful tool to restore military capacities and capabilities and enhance stability of a fragile country. What happened to France in Rwanda should not curb military assistance, cooperation initiatives, and direct military support but should arouse a greater interest for strategic communication, necessity to align intents, words, and acts from the strategic to the tactical level, and requirement to seize opportunities to promote one's message and counter the opponents' ones.

Annex A: Great Lakes Map



Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/glr.pdf>

Annex B: Rwanda Map



Source: <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/rwanda.pdf>

Annex C: Chronology of events

1962

- 1 July Proclamation of independence
- 4 December Economic, cultural, and technical cooperation agreements signed with France

1975 Military cooperation accords signed with France

1979 Rwanda starts participating in the Franco-African summits

1983 First revision of the military cooperation accords allowing French *coopérants* to be part of planning and execution of combat and law enforcement operations

1986 Habyarimana refuses the return of the Rwandan refugees

1987 Creation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in Uganda

1990

- 19 to 21 June Franco-African summit in La Baule, France; President Mitterrand gives new direction to the French African policy
- 5 July Habyarimana announces intention to open up to multiparty politics and to engage constitutional reforms
- 1 October RPF launches an attack on the north-east of Rwanda from Uganda, driving Rwanda into chaos
- 3 October Mitterrand decides French forces deployment in Kigali
- 4 October French operation NOROIT starts to protect and evacuate nationals; Zaire and Belgium send in troops
- 13 November Habyarimana proclaims opening up to a multiparty system

1991

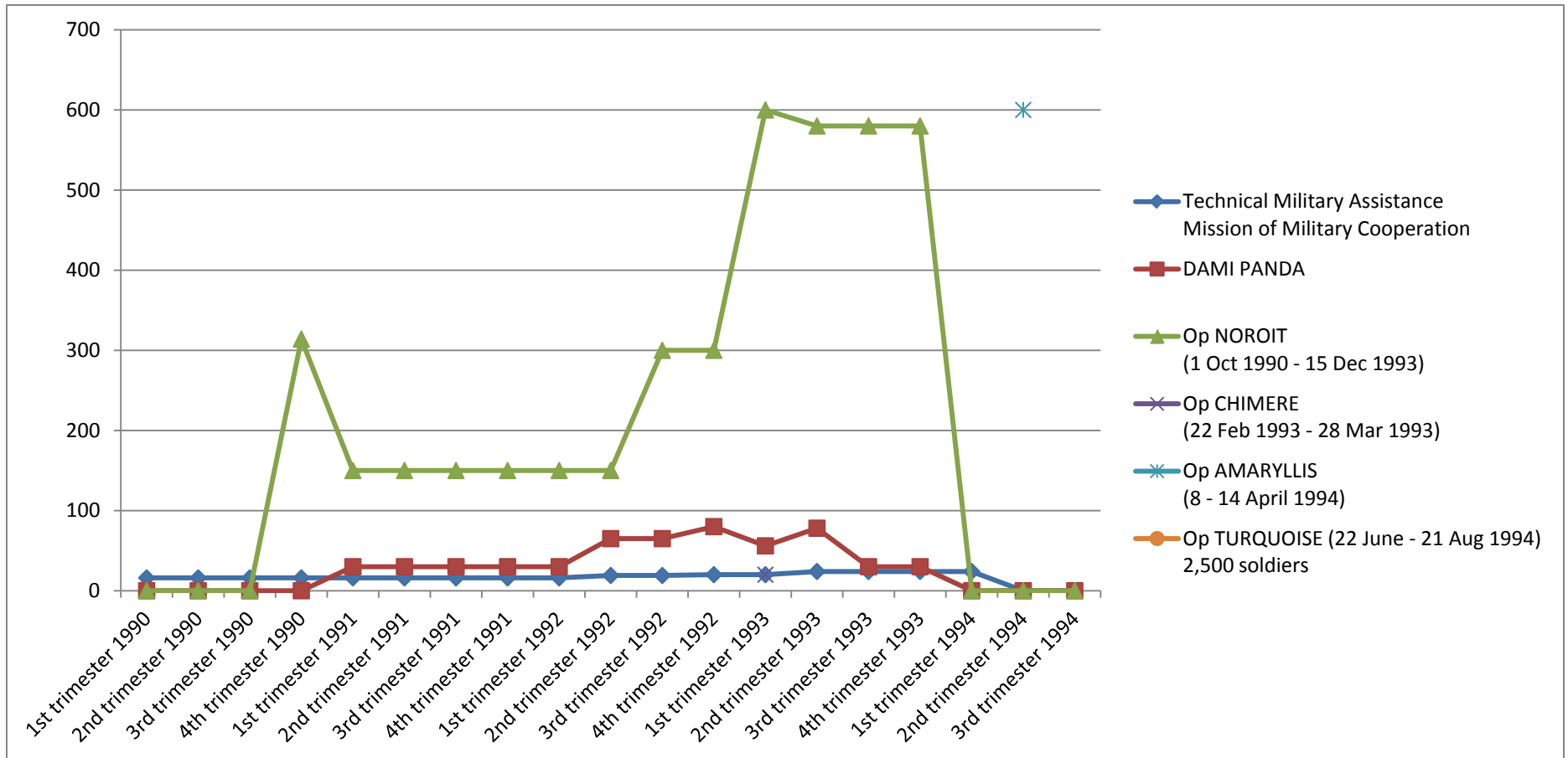
- 22 January RPF forces attack on Ruhengeri
- 23-24 January French forces conduct non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) at Ruhengeri

March	DAMI PANDA put in place to conduct operational military assistance to the RAF
August	Creation of political parties
31 December	Formation of a coalition government
1992	
Early June	RPF forces attack in Byumba
6 June	Reinforcement of French troops and NEO of foreign nationals living in Ruhengeri
June	Proliferation of <i>Interahamwe</i> anti-Tutsi militia results of Habyarimana weakened position: loss of control over the RAF, insurrectional political climate
July	RPF forces offensive takes over communes in extreme north
10 August	Formal opening of the peace negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania
26 August	Modification of the military cooperation accords extending the French cooperation to all Rwandan Armed Forces
1993	
8 February	RPF forces offensive in the north; more Hutus flee
10 February	Operation VOLCAN; reinforcement of NOROIT
22 Feb-28 March	Operation CHIMERE
6 March	At the UN Security Council France suggests a UN peacekeeping mission for Rwanda
9 March	Ceasefire signed at Dar-es-Salaam
12 March	Un Security Council Resolution 812 requests the Secretary General to examine, in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, the possibility of deploying a joint international force
March	President Mitterrand's political party lost legislative election; beginning of a <i>cohabitation</i> with a new Prime Minister, Edouard Balladur
April	French Ambassador George Martres is replaced by his colleague Jean-Michel Marlaud

22 June	UN Security Council Resolution 846: establishment of an observer force along the border in Uganda (UN Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda, UNOMUR)
4 August	Peace accords officially signed in Arusha. In the agreement, President Habyarimana agrees to share power with the Hutu opposition and Tutsi minority and establish a broad-based transitional government. The RPF forces are to be merged with the RAF. The agreement calls for the deployment of an international neutral force to monitor the situation
5 October	UN Security Council Resolution 872: creation of UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)
21 October	Burundian President Melchior Ndadaye is assassinated, massacres follow
1 November	UNAMIR starts deployment
15 December	Operation NOROIT comes to an end: all French troops leave Kigali, leaving behind 24 <i>coopérants</i>
28 December	RPF unit arrives in Kigali
1994	
11 January	Dallaire, UNAMIR Forces Commander, sends a cable to UN headquarters stating that he was tipped off by an informant that an extermination program is in place; UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations denies Dallaire's plan to seize weapons caches
March	A CIA report warns of possibly 500,000 dead if violence reignites
22 March	UNAMIR is now at full strength
6 April	President Habyarimana and his Burundian counterpart Cyprien Ntaryamira are killed in a plane crash; the killing starts in Kigali
7 April	10 Belgian peacekeepers are killed in an attempt to protect the Rwandan Prime Minister
8 April	President Mitterrand and French government decide to launch operation AMARYLLIS to protect French nationals
9 April	Belgian and French paratroopers arrive in Kigali to evacuate expatriates
12 April	Beginning of the battle for Kigali between RAF and RPF forces; Tutsis are victims of massacres

13 April	Last intervention proposal is removed from the UN Security Council under intense pressure from the U.S. Government
14 April	Operation AMARYLLIS leaves Kigali
21 April	Security Council Resolution 912 reduces UNAMIR to 270 troops
28 April	Oxfam issues a press release claiming that the massacres in Rwanda constitute genocide
17 May	Security Council Resolution 918: UNAMIR strength increased 5,500 (on paper only), arms embargo with Chapter VII enforcement measures
15 June	As the UN continues to delay deployment of UNAMIR II, France announces plan to launch its own humanitarian mission to Rwanda
22 June	Security Council Resolution 929: France authorized to engage in a Chapter VII humanitarian operation to protect Rwandan populations
4 July	RPF forces capture Kigali and Butare
5 July	France sets up a Secure Humanitarian Zone in the west
14 July	RPF forces take Ruhengeri; massif exodus towards Zaire and other neighboring countries
18 July	RPF declares end of the war and install new government
26 July	United States starts operation HOPE
22 August	End of operation TURQUOISE
31 August	All French forces have left Rwanda
8 November	Security Council Resolution 955 establishes the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

Annex D: French military commitment in Rwanda 1990-1994



Source: Assemblée Nationale. Rapport d'information parlementaire. *Les opérations militaires menées par la France, d'autres pays et l'ONU au Rwanda entre 1990 et 1994*. Paris : Assemblée Nationale n°1271, December 15, 1998.

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<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Strategic%20Communication%20Handbook%20Ver%203%20-%20June%202010%20JFCOM.pdf>.

¹ *Françafrique* refers to France's relationship with Africa. It is generally used to denounce what one considers as the new imperialism relationship France has with its African backyard defined by both official and underground networks, as well as complex economic and diplomatic relationship France keeps with its former colonies.

² General Ham, AFRICOM Commander, at the Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center on January 24, 2013. Source: <http://www.veteranstoday.com/2013/01/29/us-trained-mali-rebels-commander-visited-us/> (accessed February 1, 2013).

³ Franck Petitville, "Quatre décennies de « coopération franco-africaine » : usage et usure d'un clientélisme," *Études internationales* 27, n° 3 (1996): 571, <http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/703630ar> (accessed January 14, 2013).

⁴ Pierre Jacquemot, "Cinquante ans de coopération française avec l'Afrique subsaharienne ; une mise en perspective," *Afrique contemporaine* 2, n°238 (2011): 45, <http://www.cairn.info/revue-afrique-contemporaine-2011-2-page-43.htm> (accessed January 14, 2013).

⁵ French President François Mitterrand's speech during a Council of Ministers on 17 October 1990.

⁶ Assemblée Nationale, Rapport d'information déposé par la Mission d'information de la Commission de la Défense nationale et des Forces armées et de la Commission des Affaires étrangères sur les opérations militaires menées par le France, d'autres pays et l'ONU au Rwanda entre 1990 et 1994. *Enquêtes sur la Tragédie rwandaise (1990-1994). Tome 1*. (Paris: Assemblée Nationale n°1271, 1998), 18-19.

⁷ President Mitterrand believed that France ought to provide a global security umbrella, on one hand because it allowed African countries to settle for limited military budgets and, on the other hand, because in these particularly unstable areas if one of the regime was to collapse under the pressure of a faction helped by a neighboring country, it would likely create a reaction in chain which would jeopardize the overall stability in the French area of influence and would discredit the French security guarantee.

In 1985, French support to Rwanda was "noticeable" but not "decisive." A hundred volunteers and executives worked in Rwanda to help the government to face a deep financial imbalance and an alimental balance issue. Education, rural development, health, and infrastructures are the priorities for cooperation initiatives. Besides, the French President decided in 1989 to conduct a debt remission for Rwanda up to 36.4 billions of francs and to support the International Monetary Fund structural adjustment plan. Source: Assemblée Nationale, n° 1271, 23.

⁸ This model of agreement was still in usage in late 1990s. The agreement signed with Madagascar in 1998 used this type of military assistance agreement. Source: Assemblée Nationale, 22-23, 33.

⁹ "Government of the French Republic provides the Government of the Rwandan Republic with French military personnel whose assistance is necessary to organize and instruct the Rwandan Gendarmerie." Source: Assemblée Nationale, 27.

¹⁰ Petitville, 598.

¹¹ Jacquemot, 52.

¹² Josselin de Rohan (Senator), Rapport d'information fait au nom de la Commission des Affaires étrangères, de la Défense et des Forces armées sur la politique africaine de la France. (Paris: Sénat n°324, 2011), 8.

¹³ Sénat, 9.

¹⁴ Assemblée Nationale, 17-18.

¹⁵ Bruno Charbonneau, *France and the New Imperialism: Security Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 125.

¹⁶ *Le Monde*, 1 July 1962.

¹⁷ In 1990, agriculture was the first economic sector totalizing 90% of the labor force. Source: Assemblée Nationale, 56.

¹⁸ Bernard Lugan, *François Mitterrand, l'Armée française et le Rwanda*. (Éditions du Rocher, 2005), 41.

¹⁹ Assemblée Nationale, 75.

²⁰ Lugan, 77.

²¹ Article 5: "He shall be the guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity and due respect for Treaties." Article 14: "The President of the Republic shall accredit ambassadors and envoys extraordinary to foreign powers; foreign ambassadors and envoys extraordinary shall be accredited to him."

Article 15: “The President of the Republic shall be Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He shall preside over the higher national defense councils and committees.”

Article 52: “The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify treaties.”

Article 20: “The Government shall determine and conduct the policy of the Nation.”

Article 21: “The Prime Minister shall direct the actions of the Government. He shall be responsible for national defense.” Source: Constitution of October 4, 1958, <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/english/8ab.asp#II> (accessed 15 January 2013).

²² Petitville, 583-585.

²³ Charbonneau, 61-62.

²⁴ Intentionally, the author does not use the American designation as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff due a really different set of responsibilities fallen under the French CJCS. Indeed, as explained later on in this paper, the French CJCS has full responsibilities over the operations conducted abroad, the armed forces budget, logistic matters, armament programs management, and human resources.

²⁵ Following the RPF offensive in the north-east on October 1, 1990, President Mitterrand decided to conduct Operation NOROIT at Kigali in order to protect the French Embassy, secure French nationals, and be prepared to conduct non-combatant evacuation operations. During the first stage of the French deployment, forces were under the authority of the Defense Attaché. But, under the direct authority of the Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colonel Jean-Claude Thomann took over the command of the Operation NOROIT on 19 October when all forces were on Rwandan ground. In December 1990, with the pressure on Kigali relieved, French forces ramped down but Mitterrand, pressed by Habyarimana, ordered one company to remain, while reemphasizing the French non-commitment in support of the Rwandan Armed Forces (RAF). In June 1992, because of terrorist acts in Kigali and the renewal of RPF offensive in the north, France reinforced detachment NOROIT. Following the 31 July cease-fire and Arusha I agreements, Mitterrand asked for a general withdrawal of forces NOROIT. However, the early 1993 RPF offensive impeded this project.

²⁶ In the summer of 1990, the French military presence was limited to about twenty military coopérants working in the framework of the AMT. The MAM comprised an AMT-Gendarmerie detachment, an AMT-Army in charge of the Rwandan army aviation units, the airborne battalion, and the armored unit for training and logistic support, and an air force detachment maintaining and flying a Nord-Atlas 2501.

As from October 1990 From October to late November, France assigned a colonel as Deputy Defense Attaché in charge of advising the Rwandan Armed Forces Head Quarters.

In 1991, denying Habyarimana's request for a direct French military commitment, Mitterrand proposed to provide advice, assistance, and training to the RAF with a thirty-member Military Assistance and Training Detachment (*Détachement d'Assistance Militaire et d'Instruction – DAMI*). The DAMI was to foster a security climate favoring civilian French and foreign coopérants return, to gather intelligence, and to be prepared to secure French nationals in case of invasion.²⁶ In 1992, the CJCS sent an officer as the Deputy Defense Attaché for Operations, advisor to the Rwandan Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for an unlimited period of time in order to assist the Rwandan CJCS in conducting operations and in preparation and training of forces. Source: Lugan, 45-90.

²⁷ John Chipman, *French Power in Africa*. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 155.

²⁸ This expression has been created by Jacques Chaban-Delmas in 1959 as President of the French National Assembly. Source: <http://www.vie-publique.fr/decouverte-institutions/institutions/approfondissements/qu-est-ce-que-domaine-reserve.html> (accessed 16 January 2013).

²⁹ Lugan, 53.

³⁰ Despite this fact, the decision helped to conduct French and western nationals evacuation operation at Ruhengeri in January 1991. It highlights the “monarchical” position of the President in the decision-making process. Sources: Lugan, 64. Assemblée Nationale, 135.

³¹ Hubert Védrine, “François Mitterrand et l’Afrique,” *La Lettre de l’Institut François Mitterrand*, n° 12 (June 1, 2005), <http://www.mitterrand.org/Francois-Mitterrand-et-l-Afrique.226.html#nb1> (accessed January 17, 2013).

³² Hubert Védrine, “Rwanda : les faits,” *La Lettre de l’Institut François Mitterrand*, n° 8 (June 15, 2004), <http://www.mitterrand.org/Rwanda-les-faits.html> (accessed January 17, 2013).

³³ Indeed, a notable point is the absence in 1990 of defense agreements between France and Rwanda. Consequently, the only case in which France could support militarily Rwanda with a legal framework was to counter an external threat. This raises also the question of the definition of the refugee status. Is a refugee coming back to his country years after he left it to seize power an internal or external threat? Source: Assemblée Nationale, 125-126.

³⁴ These approval and support are still contentious today. Nonetheless, French secret services identified close personalities to Museveni who were directly providing logistic and financial support to RPF from 1990 to 1994. Source: Assemblée Nationale, 126.

³⁵ Lugan, 19.

³⁶ Facing Habyarimana's hesitations, worrying about security and stability in the sub-region, France has never undertaken radical decision to hold its cooperation or even to decrease significantly its military and civilian involvement. Source: Assemblée Nationale, 36.

³⁷ Lugan, 65.

³⁸ Lugan, 75.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Jacques Myard, *La France dans la guerre de l'information: Information, désinformation et géostratégie*, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006), 65.

⁴¹ *Commander's Handbook for Strategic Communication and Communication Strategy*, Version 3.0, US Joint Forces Command, 24 June 2010, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Strategic%20Communication%20Handbook%20Ver%203%20-%20June%202010%20JFCOM.pdf> (accessed January 17, 2013).

⁴² The reading of Charbonneau, Chapter 1, is self-explaining of the reality of this anti-French feeling.

⁴³ Petitville, 582-583.

⁴⁴ General Henri Bentegeat, former Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2002 to 2006, thinks that the boundary between indirect and direct support was intentionally removed to give room for maneuver. Interview conducted by the author, January 2013.

⁴⁵ Assemblée Nationale, 29.

⁴⁶ Ethno-nationalist Hutu press *Kangura* published in December 1990 a paper with in headlines President Mitterrand portrait with the title: "A true friend of Rwanda." Source: Lugan, 77.

⁴⁷ Lugan, 117-118.

⁴⁸ Myard, 66-67.

⁴⁹ Assemblée Nationale, 15.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 323.

⁵¹ While the author is writing this paper, France is deploying forces and conducting diplomatic initiatives in Mali to help the weak Malian government and armed forces to recover their sovereignty against Islamic terrorists.

⁵² *La révision constitutionnelle du 23 juillet 2008*, http://www.senat.fr/role/fiche/reforme_constit_2008.html (accessed January 21, 2013).

⁵³ On 11 January 2013, Malian government, unable to halt advance of Islamic terrorist groups towards the capital state, requested help of France and African countries. President Hollande agreed the request and ordered the armed forces to conduct immediate operations in Mali. Air strikes hit the rebels' columns within hours.

⁵⁴ General Henri Bentegeat, former Chief of Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2002 to 2006. Interview conducted by the author, January 2013.

⁵⁵ Nevertheless, an area of concern may rise in the coming months, insofar as discussions and debates are held which might alter the authority of the CJCS. Indeed, the Minister of Defense is attempting to retake responsibilities over the human resources and the international relations.

⁵⁶ General Henri Bentegeat, former Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 2002 to 2006. Interview conducted by the author, January 2013.

⁵⁷ Quai d'Orsay refers to the location of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris and is often used to designate this ministry.

⁵⁸ The 2008 White Paper expanded DCSD area of responsibilities to police and civilian security structural cooperation.

⁵⁹ Sénat, 30-33.

⁶⁰ Jennifer D. P. Moroney and others, *Lessons from U.S. Allies in Security Cooperation with Third Countries. The cases of Australia, France, and United Kingdom* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, October 2011), 54.

⁶¹ It is important to highlight the results of La Baule policy in 1995: all 31 Sub-Saharan African countries represented at La Baule, among them 22 *francophone* countries, had adopted multiparty politics; 17 had implemented new constitutions, set either constitutional *referendum* or legislative and even presidential elections.